

St John's Church of England School, Stanmore



COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

Date reviewed: May 2024
Date to be reviewed: Autumn 2027

School Vision

‘.....I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength’. Phil 4:13.

At St John’s we foster an ethos deeply rooted in the Bible, underpinned by **faith** and committed to educational excellence. In our community we respect that everyone is uniquely made in the image of God. We grow together in **wisdom, compassion, strength** and instil a sense of **hope** for all to flourish. ‘We make a difference’

Supported By our School Vision

Through our school’s bible reference: ‘...*I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength*’, Phil 4:13, we encourage our pupils to know that they can achieve educational excellence through Christ’s strength and their own faith. We also want our children to know that God’s love will give them the strength required to grow and achieve. Our school’s ethos helps to support pupil’s understanding of faith, prayer and presents our pupils with many opportunities to reflect upon this.

In our community we respect that everyone is uniquely made in the image of God.

Through this we encourage our pupils to understand and accept diversity and difference within cultures and each other. We support many charities within our immediate and wider community, this teaches our pupils the importance of compassion and giving hope to others less fortunate, offering them the opportunity to also flourish.

We at St John’s grow together in **wisdom, compassion, strength**. By encouraging our pupils to be reflective and sharing their views allows them to develop wisdom and draw strength from one another.

RATIONALE

We are a Christian School working together to inspire and empower each child to lead a happy and fulfilling life. Our aim is to work together and be the best we can; to care for and support one another and to respect and value one another and the environment. St. John’s is a Church of England school.

The central tenets of the Christian faith and the principles of Anglican worship are at the heart of school life and of all worship within the school. The teachings of Jesus form the basis of our school Code of Conduct and vision. Our Core Values are:

Faith – Is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see

Strength – God presents us with the strength to build and progress in our life and the lives of others.

Compassion – We are fair, we care and show understanding towards others.

Wisdom – Building confidence, discipline and knowledge to fully develop our talents in all areas of our lives.

Hope – Coping wisely with situations that will help guide us into fulfilling our aspirations

At St. John’s we hold a daily act of worship which is mainly Anglican in character but which is non-denominational. We follow the principles listed below:

- Collective Worship should be inclusive, invitational, inspiring and impacting on children and adults, extending where appropriate beyond the worship time in school for pupils.
- Collective worship should contribute to the religious education of all pupils
- Collective worship should always have a sense of occasion
- Collective worship should reflect the Anglican cycle of festivals and prayer and should encourage pupils to have confidence in their own traditions, whilst valuing the traditions of others.

AIMS

- To foster a sense of fellowship, bringing pupils together
- To foster a sense of wonder and awe at the beauty, mystery and power of the world
- To allow reflection on the fundamental questions of life and focus attention away from the concerns of the moment, to those things which are of eternal concern to human beings
- To provide an opportunity for celebration and thanksgiving and sharing of emotions such as love, joy, fear, friendship, acceptance, anguish, reverence, forgiveness, etc
- To foster concern for the needs of other people
- To provide a time for sharing successes and failures in personal, school and community life
- To provide an experience of being part of a caring community
- To foster new insights about life and foster empathy for others
- To learn about Christian festivals, the Church and the Bible
- To introduce pupils to various aspects (prayer, silent contemplation, hymn, drama, art, etc.) of religious worship
- To give time for silent reflection
- To invite a response from the children which is appropriate to the occasion
- To ensure, as far as possible, that the experiences provided are relevant to the age, aptitude and family background of pupils
- To provide an environment which is conducive to worship and appropriately resourced.

ORGANISATION

Collective worship is held during the morning on Monday – Thursday and Class Worship is held across the school on 'Friday at 3pm', providing a calm, positive part of the day in a familiar and supportive environment. Children and staff in Reception classes through to Year 2 meet together in the Lower School hall and children and staff from Year's 3 to 6 meet together in the Upper School hall.

In both cases, collective worship is usually led by a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Each member of teaching staff also leads one Act of Worship once a term with senior teachers leading a minimum of two a term. Each class is responsible for leading worship during the Spring Term. Parents are invited to attend the collective worship led by their child's class. Hymn and carol practice also take place within our cycle of worship during our Songs of Praise sessions. Music is a regular feature of our worship times, both as a background to the children entering and leaving the hall and in the communal singing of hymns and songs. Each Wednesday in the Upper School an orchestra leads the musical parts of our clergy worship. The Rector of St. John's Church usually leads one act of worship each half term and other local clergy also lead worship regularly. Clergy are informed of the theme of the week and reflect this in their worship. Clergy are invited to close act of worship by giving birthday blessings to staff and pupils. At Harvest, Christmas and Easter whole school worship takes place at St. John's Church. In addition to this, at Christmas Upper School lead an evening Carol service in church. A time of Thanksgiving is also celebrated in the local church at the end of each school year.

Key Stage 2 Class Eucharist services are held throughout the year in the Upper School. Each year group from Year 3 to Year 6 is responsible for preparing and leading the presentation of the service, which is attended by parents. The Rector, or other visiting clergy, administers the Eucharist to those eligible to receive it and gives a blessing to all others. As an introduction to the Eucharist, the children in the Lower School celebrate sharing meals once a term to celebrate the church festivals of Harvest, Easter and Pentecost. After worship, where the children and staff sit in circles on the floor, the children share the food they have usually made in their classes – bread at Harvest, hot cross buns at Easter and small cakes at Pentecost.

We always commence morning worship with the school prayer in Upper and Lower School. We conclude worship with the Lord's Prayer and reciting our school vision which is central to our school.

All pupils, of all faiths, attend collective worship unless withdrawn by their parents and no attempt is made to indoctrinate or influence the children of a Christian or non-Christian background.

At all acts of worship, candles are lit on the front table to remind the children of the presence of God. When these are lit, it is a sign to the children that they are present at worship and to behave with reverence.

All acts of worship are planned according to the theme for the week this includes either a Christian value or a theme from the liturgy set by the LDBS. The themes are generally based on the LDBS guidelines, although occasionally themes are chosen by the SLT to coincide with a particular chosen curriculum themes or linked to our core values. A record of daily worship and the themes is kept in Upper and Lower School.

Monitoring and evaluation of our worship takes place to ensure that worship is of a high quality and remains in line with the aims as described in this policy. This is achieved through:

- observation of attentiveness and enjoyment
- annual pupil questionnaires
- regular discussion with staff
- visits from governors

The governor responsible for monitoring of collective worship at St John's is Reverend Chris Tapp.

Parents have the right to withdraw their child/ren from any act of collective worship and we would request this in writing. In a Voluntary Aided school, members of staff do not have a right to withdraw from collective worship.